

# LINES IN THE SAND

This month we are profiling an Aboriginal woman who has made a significant contribution to the community in many areas. Margaret Mary Turner was amongst a delegation of Aboriginal people who greeted the Queen on her recent visit to Alice Springs and performed a similar role when the Pope visited in 1986. She has been involved in the establishment and running of Irrekelentye, a learning centre for Arrernte children in Alice Springs. Margaret Mary was awarded the Order of Australia in 1996 for services to the community.

An Arrernte woman born at Spotted Tiger near Harts Range in the 1930s, Margaret Mary remembers the Italian mica miners at Harts Range before they were interned during the war. She moved with her family to Charles Creek mission, and then subsequently went to Arltunga where she witnessed the removal of children from their families.

Since being one of the first graduates of the interpreter course at the Institute for Aboriginal Development in the early 1980s, Margaret Mary Turner has provided invaluable assistance to many Aboriginal people and their lawyers in Central Australia. Margaret Mary's first role as an interpreter was on the Ti Tree Land Claim in 1984. She has also

interpreted in the Stolen Generations case and the Alice Springs Native Title Claim, amongst many others.

Margaret Mary identifies some fundamental difficulties for interpreters in the court setting. "It can be frustrating being an interpreter because often you know that there are things that should be said that are not being said in the court". An interpreter's role is to be impartial, not to provide information. "I think that there should be four people; the client, the lawyer, the interpreter and someone who knows the person well and is able to explain things that are important to Aboriginal people".

"I think it is very important for lawyers to spend time listening to what Aboriginal people have to say. That's the main thing".

It is also important to remember that having the wrong person interpret will significantly hamper the interpreter's ability to do the job. Examples include gender related issues, having relatives of the client interpret, or where there is a culturally significant relationship between that person and the interpreter.

"It also makes a big difference if lawyers spend time before cases explaining to the interpreter what the case is about".

Margaret Mary recently performed at the Opening Ceremony of the Sydney Olympics with over 350 Aboriginal women from Central Australia. Rehearsals lasted late into the night but the organisers made sure there were fires waiting for the women when they returned to their accommodation. It was an opportunity to sit and talk with other women about important issues.

"The Arrernte women looked at the Pitjantjatjara women and saw how strong they are. We decided that it was time we had our own council. We will be looking at setting up an Arrernte Women's Council". It is hoped this council can deal with things that are affecting Arrernte people, like education for children and developing curricula. Margaret Mary also hopes the council will talk about alcohol and domestic violence and what to do about children coming before the courts. In her view, Arrernte elders should be able to deal with children who are getting into trouble in town. "Mandatory sentencing is not the right way."

**Lines in the Sand** is supplied by Law Society Alice Springs Representative Katrina Budrikis and Alternate Representative Domenic Conidi.



Eva Hoodcamp, Law Society Administration Assistant

## LAW SOCIETY WELCOMES EVA

The Law Society is pleased to welcome Eva Hoodcamp who has joined the Law Society staff team as Administration Assistant.

Eva previously worked as a law clerk for Brisbane firm Dunstan Hardcastle before moving to the Territory in September this year.

"I like working with lawyers," Eva told *Balance*. "There's often a high stress factor involved but it is always interesting."

Moving interstate is not a first for Eva — she has lived in Sydney, Agnes Water, Rockhampton and Brisbane.

"Laid back and hot" are the words Eva used to describe her first impression of Darwin.

"I was in jeans when I came off the plane from Brisbane. I walked into the heat and thought "Oh my god!" and had to walk straight back into the airconditioning," she said.

Eva includes studying, reading, horseriding and doing jigsaw puzzles among her interests.

She replaces Ramona Hotea who moves to Melbourne in December this year. The Society wishes Ramona well and thanks her for her contribution.